CTSA Steering Committee Webinar Summary
March 10, 2025; 2:30-3:30 PM ET

Steering Committee Attendees:

Michael Kurilla, Co-Chair
Ted Wun, Co-Chair
Arleen Brown
Steven Bernstein
Andrea Carnegie
Daniel Ford
Vesna Garovic

Michael Holinstat
David Ingbar
Mimi Kim
Julie Lumeng
Grace McComsey
F. Gerald Moeller

Ruth O'Hara
Mark Schleiss
Eric Vilain
Sarah Wiehe
Rosalind Wright

SC Regrets:, Reynold Panettieri, Stephan Bour, Elizabeth Ofili, Steven Reis, Doris Rubio
Elmer Bernstam

NCATS Attendees:

Audie Atienza
Heather Baker
Kris Bough
Dale Burwen
Soju Chang
Jennie Conroy
Pablo Cure
Anthony DiBello
Stephanie Ezequiel

Stacia Fleischer
Brittany Gibbons
Rashmi Gopal-Srivastava
Chris Hartshorn
Rebecca Katz
Irina Krasnova
Francisco Leyva
Joan Nagel
Thomas Radman

Erica Rosemond
Joni Rutter
Meredith Temple-O'Connor
Yolana Vallejo
Salina Waddy
Robin Wagner
Annica Wayman

Invited Guests: Nadia Islam

CCOS: Lauren Fitzharris, Kerry James, Lenore Roca, Cindy Mark

Welcome (Slides 2-3)

Speakers: Michael Kurilla and Ted Wun

M. Kurilla welcomed members of the Steering Committee (SC), briefly reviewed the agenda, and facilitated the webinar.

Working Group Proposal Process and Review (Slides 4-22)

Speakers: Cindy Mark

Presentation summary:

C. Mark explained the purpose of the SC review of Working Group (WG) proposals is to collect feedback about the proposals to inform discussion and guide voting to be held during the June 23, 2025, SC meeting. Although all SC members may participate in the June meeting, only voting members may cast ballots. She stated there are five open slots for new WGs within Cycle XIV. She shared the WG proposal review timeline, noting the submission window is open between March 1 and April 1, 2024. The Steering Committee (SC) will review proposals between April 14 and May 19 and will vote on June 23. The earliest start date for new WGs is July 1.

She explained SC voting members will access information about the review process and conduct reviews by first logging into the CCOS website and navigating to the SC Landing Page. During the WG proposal review period, SC voting members can access a button that will open the review portal. She detailed the steps SC members will take to review the submissions, including how to log in, complete a conflict-of-interest check, review proposal text, score proposals on a 5-point scale, make a final recommendation for each proposal, and edit and submit the review. The website will track progress as one saves and allows for providing overarching comments for each review. Criteria the SC typically uses to evaluate submissions, include:

- Importance of purpose
- Value of deliverables to the Consortium and Clinical and Translational Science
- Feasibility
- Proposed expertise
- Alignment with CTSA/NCATS goals

She encouraged SC members to participate in the review process and to provide constructive feedback to those submitting proposals, especially if the recommendation is to decline or request revisions to a proposal. She advised members to contact Support@ccos.ctsa.io with questions.

Questions and Discussion:

- T. Wun asked for clarification about the difference between a WG and a discussion forum.
  - C. Mark explained CCOS supports WGs by facilitating meetings and communications, whereas discussion forums are less formal.
  - L. Fitzharris stated a discussion forum is an electronic discussion board that provides an informal mechanism for connecting and collaborating using shared documents and materials.
- G. McComsey asked how many years a WG will operate.
  - C. Mark noted the majority of WG proposals request a 2-year approval.
- M. Schleiss asked about procedures for extending a WG's period of performance.
  - C. Mark stated WGs can receive extensions for 3-6 months. A 3-month extension is approved by NCATS but otherwise would need to submit a new proposal to continue work for a longer period.

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- T. Wun commented the review platform on the CCOS website is quite user-friendly.

Report Out: Collaboration & Engagement, followed by discussion / Q & A (Slides 23-35)

Speaker: Nadia Islam and Sarah Wiehe

Presentation summary:

N. Islam and S. Wiehe provided an update for the Collaboration & Engagement EC. They shared the names and credentials of the EC's leadership team and explained the EC includes over 250 active members from 74 institutions. They described committee goals, regular activities, and accomplishments for 2024. The primary objectives of the EC focus on promoting team science through collaboration, engaging stakeholders and communities in translational science, leveraging knowledge to benefit underserved communities, and diseeminating and sharing information about methods and tools. Key accomplishments for the past year include collaborations with other CTSA groups, such as the Integrtion Across the Lifespan EC; writing letters of support for 2 WG proposals; plans to highlight and promote the newly released third edition of *Principles of Community Engagement*; and hosting speakers who discussed community engagement and collaboration projects related to individuals with disability, team science, centering anti-racism, building partnerships in patient-centered outcomes research, measuring partnership impacts.

Additionally, the EC formed a Spring Meeting Planning Committee for 2025 to incorporate feedback received from surveys of EC members when developing an agenda to identify and promote community engagement accomplishments demonstrating return-on-investment (ROI). The EC would like to conduct a workshop at the meeting to capture information and continue with quarterly workshops to build capacity for recruiting relevant speakers for meetings.

EC goals for 2025 include continuing to develop partnerships with other ECs and community groups, publishing a white paper on building sustainable funding for community engagement activities, producing a toolkit of resources related to effective collaborations between institutions and community partners, sponsoring workshops, surveying Hubs to solicit impact stories to influence development of a taxonomy of partnership types, and creating visualizations of data that will be accessible to the entire CTSA network.

The representatives invited feedback from the SC regarding measures on which to focus and ways to better align with overall Health and Human Services (HHS) priorities for 2025 related to chronic and childhood diseases.

Questions and Discussion:

- M. Kurilla asked how one evaluates and defines a high-quality community engagement effort.
  - S. Wiehe stated there are multiple conceptual frameworks used that help to measure bidirectional value, availability extended funding support, and sustained accomplishments, such as outputs and products. She noted if a project has an impact story to share, the partnership is likely at least moderately successful.

- o N. Islam explained assessing impact has been a key focus of the EC, noting one session at last year's annual meeting was dedicated to brainstorming about ways to use the translational science benefit model (TSBM) to assess impact and quality of community engagement partnerships. She reported the Evaluation Working Group (WG) and many Hubs also use TSBM, and the National Academy of Medicine has developed a standardized measure for evaluating quality community engagement partnerships.
  - o T. Wun shared that feedback he has received from 4 focus groups conducted with community partners indicates a desire for tangible outputs other than toolkits or publications that are related to community health.
  - o A. Brown offered to share results of a session her group held with community partners to develop metrics for evaluating success from the community partner perspective. She also offered to share information about an economic analysis for community engagement activities conducted across California during the COVID-19 pandemic, noting it might provide a helpful lens for reviewing impact.
- M. Kurilla asked whether the EC has found there is adequate institutional support for community engagement activities.
  - o N. Islam responded, stating responses from the survey conducted to inform the Spring meeting agenda suggested including a session on strategies for enhancing institutional buy-in and support.
  - o R. O'Hara shared her desire to learn about such strategies, given institutional support is key to success.
- D. Ingbar asked whether any EC outputs related to training for early-stage faculty or trainees point to the new third edition of *Principles of Engagement* or whether the publication highlights any EC outputs.
  - o N. Islam noted a key feature of the new edition is inclusion of community case study examples of impact and success, which would be helpful for training module outputs.

Survey Responses: Pod Suggestions for future presentations discussion (Slides 36-37)

Speaker: All

Presentation summary:

C. Mark shared results from a survey of Pods conducted in January to collect suggestions for future meeting presentations at SC meetings, in-person CTSA meetings, or via webinar format (see below). M. Kurilla noted the suggestions are for topics that might interest and inform the entire CTSA.

Artificial Intelligence:

- The Role of Generative Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Other Emerging Digital Technologies in Addressing Administrative Barriers to Translational Research
- AI: Use of AI and other mechanisms to map and promote synergy across the CTSA Network. UMass proposes that AI could be used to map grants, RPPR's, publications,

etc., to identify top areas of focus and to aid in enhancing collaboration and dissemination across the network. This could also potentially identify topics that are important but not currently well-addressed.

Collaboration and Engagement:

- The Role of Community Health Workers in Increasing Community Engagement and participants reflective of the nation in Clinical Research
- Collaborations between CTSA hubs and libraries to optimize impact

Workforce Development and Clinical Research:

- Public Trust in Clinical Research
- The Role of Pathway Programs in Supporting Workforce Development for Clinical Research Staff Professionals

Communication:

- Effective communication strategies and marketing across Hubs

Element E:

- Hear more about Element E projects from NCATS vantage point and how lessons learned are being shared across hubs and being translated into wider practice, including whether they see funding opportunities in the future for hubs and others to collaborate on scaling up or disseminating successful projects or tools developed.

<u>Questions and Discussion:</u>

- M. Schleiss noted much has happened since January when the survey was distributed, given all the changes resulting from new presidential executive orders. He suggested the topic of trustworthiness and added value of NIH-funded projects to help demonstrate the ongoing effectiveness and utility of the CTSA.
- V. Garovic noted her desire to hear about successful ways to effectively communicate with state authorities and policymakers.
  - o M. Kurilla agreed this is an important topic, noting sometimes scientists forget there are other stakeholders with different perceptions and perspectives that can vary significantly across states.
- D. Ford suggested the topics of best models for creating clinical and translational research infrastructure for achieving efficient financial support.
- R. O'Hara suggested the topic of capitalizing on approaches for building partnerships for engaging underserved communities.
- G. McComsey asked if there are plans for pivoting certain CTSA projects focused on areas unpopular with the current administration, such as diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI).
  - o M. Kurilla noted so far, no CTSA projects or groups have been targeted, but NIH and HHS are actively working to comply with executive orders, so circumstances could change.

- D. Ingbar and T. Wun suggested working to build constituencies and relationships with patient advocacy groups, public health officials, or other community-based organizations to form coalitions that might improve chances for survival as many government programs are being eliminated. T. Wun added the CTSA network works to build and train the full research workforce, so there should be significant buy-in from state, county, city, and local government entities who employ a workforce focused on related work.

Adjourn (Slides 38-39)

Speakers: Michael Kurilla and Ted Wun

Presentation Summary:

C. Mark reminded members of the next webinar date and M. Kurilla adjourned the meeting.

Next Steering Committee Webinar Monday, March 24, 2025, at 2:30-3:30 PM ET